DRISHTIYOGA

(An Easy Method of Controlling the Mind)

by

Swami Rama

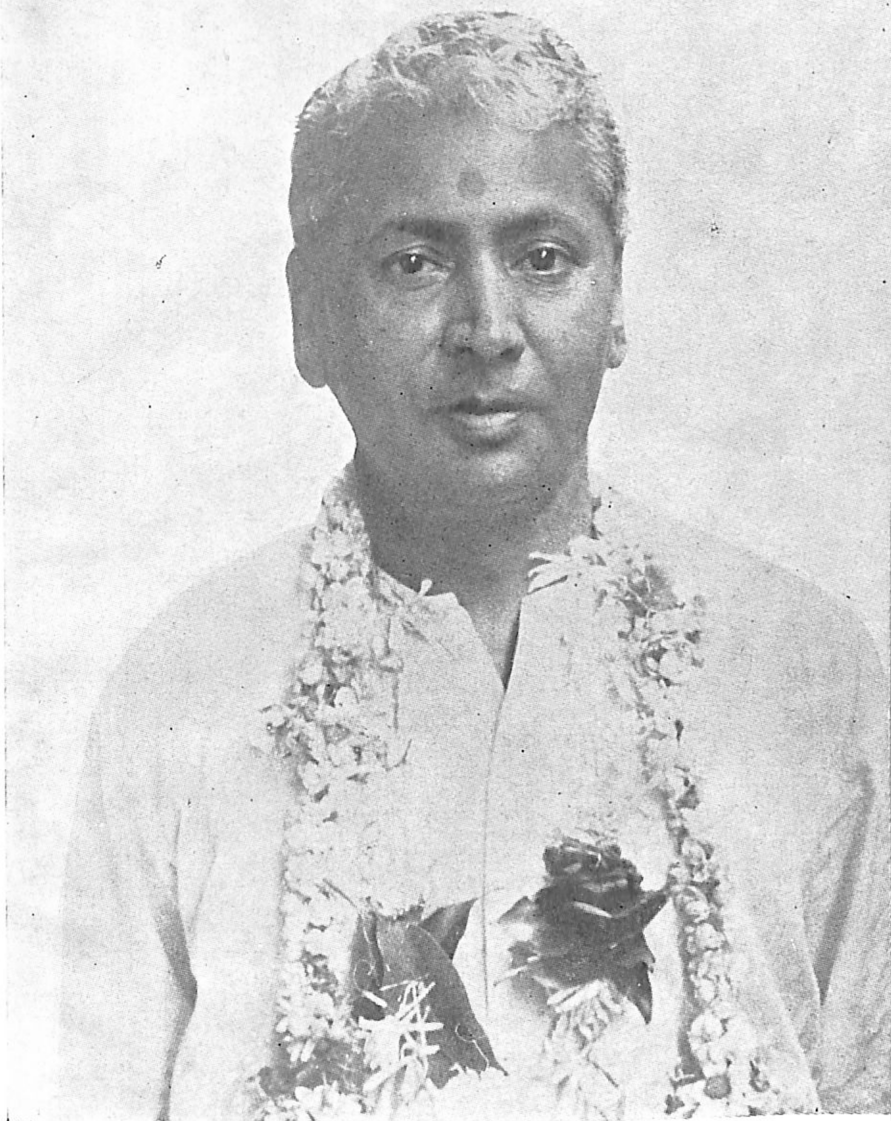
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The Om Rama Yoga Sangam
112, Rabindra Nagar
New Delhi-11

First Edition : 1969

Published by The Om Rama Yoga Sangam, 112 Rabindra Nagar,
New Delhi-11 and printed at The Printsman, New Delhi-5



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A Few Words on Swami Rama

ONE OF THE GREAT LIVING PREACHERS of yoga, Sri Swami Rama (earlier name Ramachandra), the author of *Drishtiyoga*, hails from Akola, a small township in the State of Maharashtra, India. He was born in a middle-class Brahmin family well known for its study of the Vedanta. While still a child Sri Swamiji was always gay, intelligent, fearless, courageous and a true patriot. He was greatly devoted to the higher values of life right from the beginning. Under great pressure from his parents, however, he went to school, but soon realised that the education he received was not what he was aspiring for. Half-heartedly, however, he attempted the matriculation examination, but failed. He left the school and joined a mill for a career. But he soon realised that the job was not conducive to his temperament and proved to be a hindrance in his spiritual progress. Meanwhile he fell sick and returned to his home-town. Later he came to Gwalior where he had the divine vision and guidance. It was a turning point in young Ramachandra's life. The very next day he renounced the world and left Gwalior for the Himalayas on foot in search of the ultimate Truth. He visited all the holy places in India and soon, by mastering the eight-fold yoga, attained the last stage of Self-Realisation.

It is interesting to note that Sri Swamiji did not take anyone as his Guru but received guidance from the divine.

At every crucial stage of his *Sadhana*, the Lord himself appeared before him in a saintly garb and disappeared after giving him the necessary instructions. This has happened at least three times in Sri Swamiji's life.

The first thrilling experience was at Gwalior which, in fact, was responsible to change young Ramachandra's life. Rama had come to Gwalior in search of a job and was staying with one of his father's friends. He was searching for a suitable job and at the same time, as part of his spiritual life, was reading *Gurucharitra.* He had decided to complete the reading within three days by living on water alone. Two days passed peacefully. On the third day Rama was uneasy for he was not able to win over the thought of concluding the reading by feeding Brahmins. The thought had made an impact on his mind and he had hardly any money to fulfil his desire. Besides, the stage had come when it was necessary for Rama to write to his elder brother for money to cover his travel expenses back home. It was an ordeal for him for he had never asked for any help whatsoever from anybody and without money he could not undertake the journey.

The state of affairs made Rama very sad and he went to Jayaji Park for a stroll. Lost in his own thoughts Rama was sitting on a bench in a corner. By about 8 p.m. he was alone iu the garden. It was getting dark all around. To get over his melancholy mood no sooner Rama went in meditation than he was disturbed by a human voice. He opened his eyes and found that a well-built, tall and radiant saint was standing before him. 'I am hungry, give me food'—he said in a hungry voice.

Rama wanted to give him something. He put his hand in his coat pocket to find some change but there was none. He had forgotten that he had put on a new coat. Rama felt very sorry and replied in regret, 'I am very sorry I don't have money'. The old man was not easily satiable. 'If you have no money why not give me your coat,' he grinned. 'That I will,' Rama said with relief and took off his coat and passed it on to the saint. In helplessness and humility Rama was no longer able to look at the saint. He was looking at the ground below pondering regretfully that he was not able to feed the old man.

The saint took the coat, murmured, 'Let yoga be at your command. You will roll in spiritual wealth' and disappeared. Rama lifted his eyes and discovered that he was alone and the saint had disappeared along with his coat. Rama ran about the garden and outside but could not find any trace of the old man. It was a miracle which moved Rama deep into his soul. The same night he renounced the world and set himself out on foot for the Himalayas, for Self-Realization.

For the second time the Divine Guru met him at Hardwar, a holy place on the banks of the Ganges near the Himalayas. From Gwalior Rama had gone on foot to Chamunda jungles in the Himalayas. On the other side of the holy Ganges he had a dip in the icy water of the river, spread his scanty clothes for drying and sat on the glittering sand for meditation. He had no food for three days in succession and yet he was not disturbed. No sooner his meditation was over than he found a

priest-like figure standing before him, urging 'Don't torture yourself like this. You have already mastered Yoga. Food is ready for you. Please come and take it.' Rama was in no mood to care for his physical wants. He was an enlightened person. So, he courteously declined the offer. But the intruder would not take a no. He insisted and Rama, much against his will, had to follow him to a nearby hut where delicious food was kept ready for him. Rama accepted the food as a gift from the Lord and asked the stranger who he was. With all humility the stranger replied : 'My name is Ramchandra. I am a priest at the shrine of Amarnath and I have come all the way here to feed you.' Rama was greatly surprised at these words and wanted to have a searching look at the person of his own name, coming hundreds of miles from Amarnath just to give him food. He lifted his eyes only to discover that the stranger had vanished. Rama could see the divine play and ate the food with eyes full of tears of gratitude for the Lord.

This event infused in Rama a keen urge to visit the shrine of Amarnath, the Himalayan abode of Lord Shiva. Almost immediately he set out for the shrine on foot scaling the treacherous mountains. He halted on the banks of the Satluj river, in the heart of the Himalayan mountains. It was there that the divine saint once again crystallized himself and appeared before him in person. Rama was in deep meditation when he saw a radiant sanyasin standing before him, saying in a shrill voice, "If you want to go to Amarnath why don't you go alone? You should undertake the journey immediately. If you do not know

the way, I am prepared to accompany you for I also want to go there."

Rama answered the call in the affirmative and opened his eyes to find that the sanyasin whom he had seen in meditation was actually standing before him repeating the same words.

Rama along with the sanyasin commenced his onward journey. They scaled the mountains upto Chandanwadi from where the icy track starts for the cave of Amarnath and can be covered only at the risk of one's life. At this point the sanyasin abruptly changed his mind, as if to test Rama, and told him to go alone, for he was in no mood to go any further.

It was a challenge to Rama which he readily accepted. He covered the dangerous icy track all by himself and reached the shrine. When he entered the holy cave he was astonished to find the same sanyasin standing before him and smiling. Rama could ask him no questions for the sanyasin disappeared almost immediately. The miracle filled Rama with a unique joy and he went in deep meditation in which he had the divine vision of Lord Shiva.

On attaining the last and subtle stage of yoga, Sri Swami Rama, spent many years in Kashmir working there for the cause of spiritual evolution of hundreds of people, Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Later he came down to Ludhiana in the Punjab and established his Ashrama known as *Tulsi Vatika.* He has innumerable disciples which include people from all faiths and walks of life. To this great seeker, everybody is a friend irrespective of his faith, calling, social status or sex. And,

he has made it his mission to help every human soul in its spiritual upliftment.

According to Sri Swamiji, God is nothing but the embodiment of Eternal Peace, Bliss and Fearlessness. Whereas yoga, to him, is the discipline or technique by which the individual soul is united with the Divinity. He is convinced and confident by his own experience that such a union is possible if only man practises to perform all his actions in the name of God. By doing so he will learn to live is God every moment of his life, experiencing constantly the three divine qualities of Eternal Peace, Bliss and Fearlessness. Thus he will be completely free from the worldly bondage and miseries. This, according to Swamiji is possible for every one irrespective of his sex and profession provided, of course, that he sincerely and resolutely tries for it. And for this, he does not advise anyone to renounce the world as he sincerely believes that Self-Realisation is possible within one's own society and family if only sincere efforts are made in all eagerness to cultivate the desired attitude of mind.

Sri Swamiji has a large following in India and the West though he has not travelled as much as other Missionaries do, as he believes and has demonstrated his unique ability from time to time, to pass on power by *Sankalpa* (mental vibrations) alone. Traditionally there are four ways of doing *Shaktipata*—by giving Mantram, by touch, by sight and by *Sankalpa*. He has been using all the four methods, mainly the last.

A simple and yet a radiant personality in white *tahmat* and *kurta*, unlike the saffron coloured sanyasins, Sri

Swamiji reminds us of Sri Raman Maharshi and Sri Ramakrishna Paramhamsa. His pleasing manners, humility, humour and simplicity are some of the qualities which successfully camouflage his real personality and in spite of his penetrating sharp eyes, a stranger is likely to mistake him for an ordinary man. But if he happens to be in his company for a little while his first-hand impressions would immediately be dispelled and he would be carried to the world of bliss by his divine vibrations.

Sri Swamiji has been giving spiritual guidance to thousands of people all over the world of different castes and creeds but not even once he is seen to make anyone his own disciple or to bring him to his own faith. His speciality and universality lies in his confirming the faith of those who receive guidance from him in their own religions, deities or Gurus.

As has been stated earlier, Sri Swamiji has spent a major part of his life in Kashmir and Ludhiana where he has his Ashramas even today but finally he now lives at Hardwar. His Ashrama, well know as Ramkunj, a small prefabricated house with a beautiful garden is situated at Sapta Sarovar, across the bund, right on the bank of the holy Ganges. The crystal clean, icy, blue water of the Ganges flows in front of the Ashrama with its divine music and high up in the sky is extended the glittering Milky-way almost parallel to the Ganges. Uninfested by the saffron coloured disciples and charged with the divine vibrations of Sri Swamiji, the Ashrama is a symbol of bliss and tranquillity.

Swamiji has been kind enough to bless his devotees

with many books particularly in Hindi although he also wrote in Marathi and English. *Drishtiyoga* is the second book in the English series, the first being *The World A Fancy Tree*.

Great Yogis have, from time to time, said a lot about Yoga but very few have publicly discussed its technique. Swami Rama has, perhaps for the first time, introduced to the reader the technique by which even a novice can practise meditation and can reach the Supreme State. This valuable book of 'Know-How' on Yoga will, I am sure, go a long way in making the science of Yoga accessible to the common man.

I must, on behalf of the Sangam and on my own behalf, express deep gratitude to His Holiness Swami Rama for permitting the Sangam to publish this valuable thesis for the benefit of millions of thirsty souls.

I must also thank Sri V.R. Bapat for rendering this faithful translation into English, and Sri S.B. Athalye for sparing his valuable time for going through the manuscript.

R.S. KELKAR

New Delhi
Ganga Dashehra

1

An Easy Method of Controlling the Mind

THE revered world teacher Shri Shankaracharya in his question-answer style poses the question : "Who can conquer the world ?" and answers it thus : "He who can conquer his mind." From a detailed study of the Vedas, the Upanishadas, the treatises on the Science of Yoga and the Puranas, we learn that since the early days of the Vedas, people were finding it very difficult to control the mind. Vedic literature and scientific treatises like *Patanjala Yoga* aim at imparting knowledge of this technique.

During the Vedic period, society was care-free, well-knit, happy, healthy and dynamic. To sustain a society which was so very highly developed, literary production had to attain an equally high standard. It had two main themes : the elaboration of the traditional ritualism and the speculations of the philosopher-cum-mystic on the nature of the ultimate reality. It did not cater either to the cravings of sensuous people or to their vulgar passions. On the other hand, its primary aim was to inculcate control of the sense-organs and thus to ensure the spiritual and moral evolution of man. The authors were towering supermen who had cogitated for long years on the fundamental problems of life and death. They were paragons of virtue and set noble ideals before society. Even in those days control of mind was considered to be an utopian idea. Readers will there-

fore appreciate how very difficult it is bound to realize in modern times. The present-day society is in a decadent state. Literature which mirrors faithfully the life, thoughts and aspirations of society is currently produced mostly by immature and half-baked writers lacking in the backbone of character and high ethical standards. It is third-rate and its reading results in fanning vulgar passions. People have developed a taste for such literature and their minds have become slaves of their sense-organs which are prone to seek only sensuous pleasures. In such a desperately hopeless state of affairs to think and talk of controlling the mind is difficult but I assure you that it is not altogether impossible.

If people in a society want to live with dignity and self-respect, they must learn the art of controlling the mind. A diligent study of this art will not only lead to the evolution of a more disciplined and well-poised society but it will enable man to work wonders. All modern inventions such as television, telestar, spaceships, electronic brain, etc. are the achievements of mighty and disciplined minds. A society which abounds in men who have trained and disciplined their minds can alone become mighty, glorious, prosperous and enjoy freedom. If any country has ever been in need of learning the technique of controlling the mind and thus attaining strength, physical and spiritual, it is India. There are quarrels, bickerings and fight between brothers and brothers, husbands and wives. We witness here numerous dissensions in family life, widespread discontent and general physical debility. Therefore, it is a must for the men

and women of this country to discover a sure means to control and discipline the mind. Numerous methods have been recommended in ancient texts but '*Drishtiyoga*—The Yoga of Sight (*Tratak*)' is the simplest of all. It starts with concentration of the eyes on a chosen object and leads on to quietening of the mind and if it is wisely practised then man can undoubtedly scale the summit of the 'Blissful State (*samadhi*)'. The author has had personal experience of this and therefore he has ventured to place this panacea before the society for the benefit of the masses.

The word *Tratak* is used in the Science of Yoga. Before starting 'control of life-forces (*pranayama*)' the student of Yoga has to practise six yogic exercises whereby the body becomes pure, diseaseless and gains a healthy lustre. This helps to build up the control tower of Life forces.

The six exercises are broadly as follows—

(1) *neti*—Cleaning of nose and throat by putting a small thread or a rubber tube through one nostril and taking it out through the mouth and slowly moving it.

(2) *dhouti*—Cleaning intestine and throat by inserting a small piece of cloth into the stomach and slowly taking it out.

(3) *basti*—this is similar to taking an enema.

(4) *nauli*—In a sitting or slightly bending forward position in standing, moving the stomach from right to left and vice-versa.

(5) *kapal bhati*—Inhaling and exhaling actions with

force like bellows ; and

(6) *tratak*—fixing the gaze steadfastly on any object.

In the sixth chapter of the *Bhagavadgita* Lord Shri Krishna has suggested the same technique to Arjuna to quieten the mind. He explains :

samam kayshirogrivam dharayannachalam sthiram
sampreksh nasikagr am swam dishachchanavlokyan
(VI. 13)

'Holding the trunk, head and neck erect and still, looking fixedly at the tip of the nose, without looking around' start your practice. In these instructions Lord Shri Krishna implied the practice of *tratak*.

Of all the sense-organs eyes are the most powerful. The entire world consists of objects with forms and therefore it provides a rich feast for the eyes. Whereever they wander they come across new and attractive forms. In their wanderings, they drag the mind also after them. Because of the variety and the vastness of objects, the eyes do not remain steady on any one object nor do they allow the mind to be steady on any of them. Therefore, even though God has endowed man with mighty powers, he becomes prey to perishable sense-objects and ultimately ruins himself. These very eyes were instrumental in rousing Bilvamangal's passion to commit adultery. However at the nick of the moment wisdom dawned on him. He repented for his folly and asked for two needles from the lady, thrust them into his eyes and thus destroyed his eyesight. Later on he devoted his life to singing devotional songs in the praise of Lord Shri Krishna. Thus, he became famous as blind Surdas.

It is not intended to suggest to everyone to make oneself blind as Surdas did. The technique suggested is to control and conserve the vision capacity of the eyes by training the eyes and to harness it to achieve the final goal of quietening the mind. In our eyes God has kept a reservoir of tremendous energy. By harnessing it man can accomplish the impossible only if he knew how to make the best use of this precious gift.

Nowadays, in the West by fixed gazing, the mesmerists and hypnotists are exhibiting wonderful feats such as making the man insensitive to pain, inducing enforced sleep and making him act as per suggestions. The Westerners consider it as a feat of will-power. By will-power man can achieve wonderful success in the material field—he can amass plenty of money in business; he can be a learned scholar; he can be a powerful orator; he can earn great name and fame. It should, however, be remembered that it is not enough to have such power; one must know how to utilise it in a just and righteous way. Otherwise man is likely to misuse it to satisfy his lustful and selfish desires by immoral and wicked means. That will ruin him completely. Therefore, before acquiring such power, one should learn to lead a righteous life and acquire efficiency in the proper use of will-power. There is thus a vital difference between the Eastern and Western ideologies. The Westerners attempt concentration on a black point and that too with a view to accomplishing some selfish desires. On the other hand, ancient sages of the East have suggested such objects for concentration which have glorious past history; objects which are endo-

wed with divine qualities like righteousness, piety, unalloyed and unselfish love and sincere urge to serve God by serving humanity. By concentrating one's mind on the pictures of great personalities like Bhagwan Ramchandra, Bhagwan Krishna, Shri Ved Vyas, Shri Vasistha, slowly but surely one gets surcharged with their divine qualities. The science of Yoga propounded by Patanjali establishes the truth of the above proposition. It is for this reason that we decorate our houses with statues, idols and pictures of great men like Shri Shivaji, Rana Pratap, Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bhagwan Ramchandra, Bhagwan Krishna, Bhishma Pitamah, Bhimsen, Swami Ramkrishna Paramhamsa, Swami Vivekanand, etc. Our object in doing this is that whenever we look at them we should be reminded of their noble qualities and if perchance we succeed in concentrating our eyes on them then we would draw inspiration from them and try to inculcate in ourselves their noble virtues and thus make our lives sublime. It is, however, a pity that while there is hardly any person who does not have such statues or pictures in his house, they are there merely as pieces of decoration and not intended to enhance the beauty of the Inner Self by imbibing their divine qualities. In fact, all of us decorate our houses with a number of pictures, statues and photographs of great and divine personalities but neither do we fix our gaze on them steadfastly nor do we think of imbibing their noble virtues. Concentrating one's eyes on the picture of any divine personality, or if the human figure is not acceptable then on any

divine symbol like 'Om' is the first lesson in the *Tratak* practice. Some one may venture to enquire as to what benefit one can derive by simply looking at a picture or a symbol. With all humility Rama submits that in steadily looking at the object lies hidden the unfoldment or un-manifest divine powers. There is a great scientific truth in it. There is a very close connection between our eye-sight and life-force (*Prana*). When we concentrate our eye-sight on any object for a long time then the flow of life-force becomes rythmical and steady. Generally a healthy person breathes (inhaling and exhaling action is counted as one) 15 times per minute. In the case of a weak or sick person this increases to 25-30 times per minute. Again, there is interdependence between our breathing and thought or desire ripples. In one inhalation there can be one ripple of thought or desire. Similarly, in one exhalation one similar ripple can arise. In this way in one complete cycle of breathing man can have two thoughts or desires. This means that in a minute a healthy person can have 30 thoughts whereas in the case of a sick person the thoughts increase to 50 or 60. Thus, the mind of a person who has 60 thoughts per minute in his mind will be fixed on each single thought for a second only and in the next second it will flit on to another. Naturally, his mental energy will be concentrated on each thought for only a fraction of time; therefore, that thought will not receive sufficient mental energy for its fulfilment. In this way thousands of weak and therefore unfulfilled desires lie in heaps in the lumber room of the mind. Consequently such a disappoin-

ted and dejected man puts the blame on the world or on God for his utter failure throughout life. But he hardly realises that neither the world nor God is responsible for his failure. The blame lies at his doors only. His own weakness, the low calibre of his means and lack of control over the eyes and mind energy are responsible for his failure. As the sight becomes steady the current of the life force becomes steady and uniform. Mind always travels as though in a car or an aeroplane of life-force. Naturally mind has no speed of its own. Its speed is governed by and is the same as that of the life-force. Therefore, when the speed of life-force slows down, the mind's notion also slow down. Thus, when you slow down your breathing, the thought ripple remains for a longer time and therefore the mind is concentrated on that thought for a longer time. Consequently such a thought becomes very powerful and it is fulfilled.

Rama's own experience while he was staying in the Bhutnath cave near Hardwar may be illuminating to the readers.

Consciously or unconsciously Rama used to feel that having developed the attitude of complete surrender to God he had no desires of his own to be fulfilled. Whatever things he needed were required in order to serve Him only and therefore without Rama's asking for them God should give them to him. In spiritual practice, in order to reckon the proper proportion of 1; 4 ; 2 in inhalation, retention and exhalation of breath Rama badly needed a watch.

One day while sitting for meditation, the idea of a

watch suddenly flashed in Rama's mind. At the same time, another thought sprang up suggesting that if force is created in the desire for watch then the merciful God was sure to fulfil it. Rama's heart was filled with joy. He wanted to carry out an experiment and discover whether if the mind is concentrated on one single thought continuously for hours together God fulfilled it or not.

In the same afternoon he wrote on a piece of paper 'Wanted watch' and fixed it on the wall in front of him, and in a sitting posture started gazing at it. Thus nearly 2½ hours passed. There was then a knock on the door. The stranger said 'I am a visitor; please open the door.' Rama considered his coming as an obstacle in his practice. However, Rama very reluctantly opened the door and the visitor came in. After a formal talk he enquired as to how Rama arranged for his food and how Rama spent the whole day in the cave. Suddenly the stranger's eyes fell on the paper and he said, 'So you need a watch; please let me know if you need anything else.' He then left. Next day he dropped in and presented to Rama a beautiful alarm time-piece and entreated him to let him know if Rama needed anything else. He then took leave of Rama.

Therefore if we desire to make our life-mission successful and lead a dynamic, powerful and peaceful life, we must practise concentration of our eyes on a picture of some great personality or on the image of God.

Our ancient Aryan religion recognises liberation of man as the highest achievement and summum bonum of life. Enjoyment of material objects or attainment of

material prosperity were never recognised as ultimate aims because material enjoyments and wealth in the ultimate analysis are transient and one day or the other they are bound to perish. Thus, if we hanker after them they are sure to desert us leaving us unhappy, distracted and dejected. This is precisely why our ancient religion and culture beckon us towards that high goal, the ultimate Reality, which symbolizes truth and immortality. While steering our path by keeping that beacon-light always in our view, we will never lose our peace of mind, the dark clouds of sorrow will never invade our kingdom of beatitude; and enjoying the blissful state throughout life we will discharge our ordained duties with serenity, unattachment and great zeal. The Yoga of Sight about which you will learn more in the following pages is intended to take you to that destination. The first step in this practice is to concentrate your eyes on the form of God.

2

Yoga Explained

'O mind, who is truly happy in the world? Enquire and find out for yourself.' Thus saint Ramdas in his crackwhip style addressed the mind. Knowing the negative reply he consoled it by saying : 'The joy or sorrow which comes your way in this world is of your own making; it is the result of your past good or bad actions.' In spite of material prosperity and the great strides that science has made, man's happiness has not increased. Nay, the twentieth century man is not even a weebit happier than his compeer in the first century. His desires have increased out of all proportions to their actual fulfilment and each unfulfiled desire adds to his sorrow.This can mathematically be well illustrated. Happiness can be equated to a fraction whose denominator is the sum total of man's desires and numerator denotes the number of desires fulfilled at any given moment. You will find that the denominator goes on increasing rapidly whereas the numerator increases very slowly. The value of such a fraction goes on diminishing. It is no wonder then that whenever one looks around one cannot notice anyone who is free from anxieties, worries and sorrows. Take the case of even the richest man in the world, you will find him affected by the cancer of desires and carbuncles of conceit. This is apart from his thousand and one physical ailments but his greed for aggrandisement hardly leaves him time to pause and discover that happi-

ness does not depend upon riches or material objects. Similarly, take the poor man. His care-worn face will at once betray that happiness has deserted him since ages. Happiness is therefore like a Mirage to everybody. The more one hankers after it the more it eludes him. And yet man has not given up his incessant quest for happiness, because the source of happiness is within himself. His inner self is nothing else but pure existence, concicousness and bliss (*Sat-chit-anad*). All the attempts are thus directed towards regaining the lost paradise. You will naturally pose a question—If our real nature is bliss, then why are we all suffering? Our ignorance (*avidya*) and non-apprehension of reality (*maya*) are the root-cause of all our sufferings. Since we have lost the intelligence and capacity to recognise our true nature we got ourselves entangled in the meshes of the world (*samsar*) and we are still in chains, forged and tied around by ourselves.

A newly born lion's cub once strayed out of the company of lions and fell in company of a flock of sheep. It remained in their company for quite a long time with the result that it lost awareness of being a lion and it began behaving like sheep only. One day a lion chanced to see it and felt pity for it. In order to make the cub realise its true nature, the lion took it to a nearby lake and helped it to peep into water. The moment the cub saw its real image in water, it recognised its true self and then roared out in great joy. Man's condition is just like that of the cub brought up in the midst of a flock of sheep. If once he succeeds in self discovery, either through the grace of some teacher (*Guru*) or his own efforts then he

is sure to regain his '*sat-chit-anand*' state. There are saints, a few indeed living now also, who are not only themselves ever established in this state but can take others to that state by their grace.

The ancient Aryan religion gives us the golden key of *yoga* to open the gates of the kingdom of happiness so that we can straightaway walk up to the throne and claim the sole monarchy.

If there is any word of Indian philosophy which is widely used but generally misunderstood, it is the word *yoga*. Our own people as well as foreigners have a misconception of a *yogin*. They recall to their mind a picture of a half-clad or nude person with a long beard, body besmeared with ashes all over, sitting in some jungle or lying with his back on a wooden platform covered with iron nails or wandering on the banks of some river with a begging bowl and a wand in his hands. His only claim is he can perform some miraculous feats. It is utterly a false picture. A real *yogin* is one who, whatever may be his outward appearance, is ever merged with the supreme Reality (*Brahman*). This state is achieved by the constant practice of *yoga*.

Yoga is a Sanskrit word derived from the root '*yuj*= to join'. The idea of joining conveys three things. The two objects which are to be joined together and the third represents the process or technique of joining them together. It is called *yoga*. It should however be remembered that this process of joining is neither physical nor chemical in nature. It is, moreover, so subtle and superfine that once the joining is complete, the man loses his

identity completely and becomes one with God.

The technique of this union has been exquisitety explained in the Vedas, Upanishadas, the *Bhagavadgita*, Patanjala Yoga Sutras, etc. Patanjali's Yoga Sutras open with the *Sutra*—"*yogah cittavrattinirodhah*". Yoga means the control and cessation of thought ripples.

The *Bhagavadgita* propounds three major *yogas : Karma yoga*, *Jnana yoga* and *Bhakti yoga*. In an epigrammatic style it has given the quintessence of *yoga* in sentences like:

'*samatvam yoga uchyate*'—Poise of mind is called *yoga*.

'*yogah Karmasu Kausalam*'—*yoga* is skill in action, etc.

There are several other *yogas* such as *Dhyan yoga*, *Raj yoga*, *Hatha yoga*, *Japa yoga*, *Mantra yoga*. In fact, there are numerous *yogas* to suit the taste and aptitude of every aspirant. All processes are however the same inasmuch as they lead to the same goal.

The *yoga* of sight is one of them. The organ and faculty of perception are the pivotal points in the technique of this *yoga*.

'*Dristim jnanamayim kritva, jagat Bharmamayam pasyet*'. Dear friends, Rama can discern a mischievous smile and impatience on your faces, sceptical as you appear to be about the achievements of *yoga*, you are at the same time eager to catch hold of the promised happiness.

Lord Shri Krishna guarantees the result thus,

yujan evam sada tmanam yogi niyatamanasah
santim nirvan paramam matsamstham adhigacchati

(B.G., VI. 15)

'The *yogin* of subdued mind ever keeping himself thus harmonised attains peace, the supreme bliss which rests in Me'.

Again he declares,

prasantamanasam hyenam yoginam sukham uttomam
upaiti santarajasam brahmabhutam akalmasam

(B.G., VI. 27)

'For supreme happiness comes to the *yogin* whose mind is peaceful, whose passions are at rest, who is sinless and who is identified with God.'

Of course, the nature of supreme happiness cannot be described by words. It is a matter for personal realisation only. However, for mental evaluation, the Taittiriya Upanishad gives us a glimpse of that happiness. The measure of a unit of happiness is described thus—suppose there be a youth good, well disciplined, healthy and strong. Imagine that all this earth with its entire wealth belongs to him. This happiness if multiplied by hundred fold is the happiness enjoyed by human Gandharvas. Its hundred fold is the happiness of celestial Gandharvas; hundred fold of this is the happiness of the Manes; again, multiply by hundred and you get the happiness of those born in *Devaloka*. This progressive ladder of happiness continues high up till you reach the stage of *sat-chit-anand* and remember all this is promised to any and every mortal who knows the path of *yoga* and practices it.

4

Conception of God

THE *Bhagavadgita* is a very precious jewel of the spiritual literature of the ancient Aryans. Very pithily it proclaims the nature of God in:

avinasi tu tadviddhi
yen sarvam idam tatam (B.G., II. 16)

'know it as imperishable, that which pervades everything'. The entire world is filled with it. There is not even an iota of space which is not occupied by it. In the srutis, Vedas and in the Bhagavadgita and elsewhere God has verily been described as 'that which is beyond the ken of mind and other senses', '*Om* is the imperishable reality'. It is *Om* etc.' Having thus enlightened ourselves from the considered opinion—expressed in the authoritative scriptures like *srutis*, *Smritis*, etc. about the nature of God, doubts will naturally arise in one's mind as to 'How we can concentrate our eyes on God when His from or nature is beyond the comprehension of mind, speech and other sense-organs? How can we bring it before our mind's eye?' To ask us to concentrate our eyes on an object which is beyond perception is as meaningless as to advise eating fruits from the garden of space to satiate our hunger!' Indeed, it looks chimerical! But let us pause and ponder over to find out if it is possible. The holy scriptures tell us 'God is unmanifest, formless; The entire world is filled by Him and He is symbolised by the world *Om*.' Perfectly all right. Let us turn to Geometry to

see whether it can suggest to us any solution to our problem. The entire edifice of geometry is based on the solid foundation of 'point'. The geometricians define point as that which has neither length, breadth nor thickness. The 'point' of geometricians is formless and therefore it is not an object which can be perceived. Still they have developed the idea of a line which is formed by placing innumerable points together. When arranged in one particular manner, such lines go to form a triangle. Developing the idea further, quadrilateral, pentagon, hexagon, circle—all such perceptible figures are conceived from 'point' only. All these figures are thus conglomerations of formless points only. Therefore, whether we think of a triangle, a quadrilateral, a circle or for that matter any geometrical figure, we perceive 'point' only which in reality is unmanifest, formless and indivisible. In a similar way, it can be logically deduced that all objects forms in this world are manifestations of that *Om* (a symbol of Supreme Reality) which is indivisible, unmanifest, formless and indestructible. Therefore, even if we meditate and concentrate upon any object of the world taking it to be the manifestation of God we will derive the same benefits as by concentration on God.

We turn to another illustration to convince ourselves whether that *Om* which is formless and unmanifest can or cannot be an object of perception. *Srutis* tell us :

akasat vayuh vayoh agnih
agneh apah adbhyah prithvi

(Taittiriya Upanishad 1-2)

'From space air emerged, from air fire, from fire water

and from water earth'. The Vedas declare :

'purus evedam sarvam'

(Shvetashvataropanishad 3-15)

'All this is He alone'. Our modern Science tells us that when two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen are combined together, heat is produced and drops of water are formed. Any student of physics can demonstrate this by experiment in the science laboratory. Thus, from the combination of gases which are not perceptible to our eyes are obtained heat and water which can be felt and perceived by our sense-organs. When water stills down then some particles of impurities settle down; thus earth is formed. It is therefore an established fact that in water there are invisible gas elements of oxygen and hydrogen. There are heat and earth also. Now observe, in space which cannot be seen, various kinds of gases are present and in each and every particle of gas there is space because no particle can exist without space. Since gas is in water space is equally in water. If we decompose water into its components of oxygen and hydrogen then no trace of water is left. In other words, water then takes the form of gases and gases in turn are nothing but form of space. Therefore, when we think of water, you will yourself understand that whether we realise it or not we naturally think of space which we cannot see with the naked eyes. The entire universe is formed out of the five elements described above and these subtle elements are the manifestations of imperceptible God. Therefore if we meditate upon any object in this universe accepting it to be God then with-

out our conscious efforts we will automatically be meditating upon God only and as a consequence we will reap the fruit of direct meditation and vision of God.

Assuming that by concentrating on any physical object in this world thinking it to be a manifestation of God we can achieve the desired goal of concentration on formless God, still, the question arises : since there are innumerable objects in the universe and we cannot possibly concentrate on all of them, then what object should we choose for meditation ? Lord Krishna, the eminent king of yadavas, who is considered as epitome of bliss par excellence has given us the answer in his ambrosial song thus—

Yad-yad vibhutimat sattwam
Srimad urjitam eva va
tad-tad eva vagachhatwam
mam tejonsasambhavam

(B.G., X. 41)

'Every such creature as is endowed with splendour, brilliance of power knows that to be my manifestation or a spark of my effulgence'.

In the four categories of creation such as (*Swedaj, udbhij, andaj* and *jarayuj*) born out of sweat like bacteria, born from seeds like plants and trees, born from eggs like birds and serpents and those born from the womb like animals and men—man occupies the first rank and amongst men he who is endowed with sublime and divine qualities like high moral sense, self-less love, profound knowledge, infinite capacity to work, boundless fortitude and inborn fearlessness is supreme. Here are a

few examples of such great personalities—Lord Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vishnu, Shri Dattatreya, Bhagwati Durga, Annapoorna, Savitri, Saraswati, Umeshwari, Gayatri, Kali, etc.

5

On What Objects should We concentrate Our Sight ?

IN this wide world, full of rich diversity, no two persons' tastes or likes and dislikes are alike though the common bond of humanity runs through all of them. According to the carried forward impressions of past births as well as according to natural tendencies, every one follows pursuit of his liking. Thus, one is found engaged in swelling his bank balances; someone hankers after social status, someone considers teaching as his life mission; someone is interested in doing humanitarian work; someone retires to the jungle and spends his life in meditation. On account of such a variety of tastes and pursuits men are bound to differ in their ideals of workship. In consonance with his avowed goal, each one will seek the fulfilment of his desires. Thus, somebody will take to the workship of Laxmi, another to that of Sarasvati, yet another will worship Rama or Kali, the destroyers of evil doers, whereas someone may worship Shri Krishna, who is deeply attached to his devotees or Bhagwan Shankar, who is ever in tune with the Infinite. Therefore, howsoever ideal one particular object of meditation may be, it would be a great blunder to recommend one and the same object to one and all. We witness violent and uncompromising controversies raging around us because of the large number of divergent schools of thoughts interpreting the ancient Aryan reli-

gion and sponsoring various ideals of worship. Some say Rama is the only ideal manifestation of God. Some disregard him and extol Lord Krishna; there is yet another school which looks down upon earlier schools and propagates to cult of Lord Shankar. Some others, discarding other forms of Gods and Goddesses, hold in high esteem either Bhagawati Kali or Sarasvati. Apart from all these, there is yet another school of thought which bitterly inveighs worship in any form but advocates worship of the formless *Om* as the best. There are a few more schools of thought whose approach is altogether different. These schools denounce every religion and worship as a big humbug and opine that there is no need to believe in God or to presume the existence of any Supreme power. Since we are least concerned with this last school in our discussion, it is considered irrelevant and otiose to dilate upon this theory.

In order to support their stand the votaries of 'Om' advance the argument that the prevalence of the caste system, class distinction, idolatry and acceptance and worship of innumerable Gods and Goddesses are responsible for making Indians weak, servile pessimistic, downtrodden and a third-rate nation. This criticism may be true to a certain extent, but a little more reflection shows that it is hardly justified. In this world there are people who believe in one God; however, can we vouchsafe that they are not divided by internal factions or rivalry? Are not some such nations still in bondage? Do we not encounter such people indulging in immoral, unjust and atrocious activities for their selfish designs? When this is

the state of affairs of nations which believe in one God and when we find that they have also failed to achieve high human ideals, it is preposterous to advance aforesaid causes for the downfall of India.

So long as man is not in a position to control his mind and sense organs and thereby to become the master of his nature he is bound to be a slave to his natural tendencies. We notice that even in the case of one single individual thousands of varieties of thought spring forth in his mind day in and day out. How can we, therefore, expect that several individuals with divergent natural traits will have only one taste and will be inclined to accept an identical object for concentration? In fact, there is nothing wrong in having different objects for concentration to suit the varieties of tastes. Do we not realize that a nation or a country or a society does need the services of experts and technicians in every walk of life such as engineers, teachers, business magnates, artisans, generals, commanders, admirals, musicians, dancers, etc.? Every one of them is deeply interested in his own subject and devotes himself wholeheartedly to attain perfection in his field. There is nothing wrong in his deep devotion to his own subjects and their presiding deities, but for which he would not attain excellence in his sphere. What is, however, objectionable is the irrational assumption that his own deity is supreme and superior to all the others and therefore the condemnation of others. If the worshippers of different Gods and deities could rationally think and realise that although their individual God is supreme, *He* being indivisible and all-pervading, all

others are also worshipping 'Him' only in different names and forms, the whole outlook would change. All kinds of misunderstanding, which is the root-cause of all troubles and turmoils in the world, will come to an end. Such a rational approach would lead to mutual understanding and tolerance and every one would be following his pursuit with perfect understanding by concentrating on his favourite deity. Thus, the object of concentration may differ but every one would serve only one Supreme and all-pervading Reality in the form of his society, state or nation. While thus enriching his own society, state or nation he himself could reach the summit of both mundane as well as spiritual progress and ultimately attain the blissful state which is the summum bonum of spiritual life. All this is possible only when the aspirant gains true knowledge of that indivisible, infinite, all-powerful and all-pervasive Supreme Reality. This knowledge can be gradually acquired and imbibed by reading, reflecting and contemplating upon the teachings of sacred books like the Vedas, the *Bhagavadgita* etc., by worshipping Him with devotion and rendering selfless service to humanity according to one's ability, means and natural inclination. In our society to-day this ideal of devotion and selfless service is, however, conspicuously absent. What one witnesses is a mere show and sham since there is lack of sincerity, faith and fixity of purpose. However high be a man's object of meditation, whether with or without form, if he shows intolerance towards a similar ideal of others, then, know it for certain that he has no genuine and high esteem for his own ideal as well and

that he has not realised the omnipresence of the object of his own workship. Consequently he fails to recognise the identity of the diverse objects of worship and in his ignorance he looks down upon adherents of other forms of worship. However, he who has realised the oneness and all-pervasiveness of the object of his own meditation, can have no quarrel with those who choose other objects for their meditation. To denounce others' ideals and wage war against them amounts to disrespect for one's own ideals and fighting with oneself. According to variety in tastes and aptitudes, there is room for a diversity in ideals in this wide world, since all men do not have the same mental stature or outlook. According to the theory of evolution some might have recently evolved from goat, sheep, monkey, cow, horse, lion, leopard, owl, etc. to the stage of a human being. The *Bhagavadgita* states :

Yam-yam va pi smaran bhavam
tyajaty ante kalewaram
tam-tam evai ti Kaunteya
sada tadbhavabhavitah (B.G., VIII. 6)

'A living creature is born again in that type of life where it could fullfil its desires which are uppermost in its mind at the time of death'. It is thus clear that man takes a new birth to fulfil his desires. It is, therefore, no wonder that there is a very wide divergence in the ideals of different men. Therefore, a man should choose an ideal which suits his nature, be it with or without form but he must have a natural liking, respect and unalloyed devotion for the same, be it Shri Rama, Krishna, Dattatreya, Durga, Kali, 'Om', Truth, Bliss, Love, etc. Choose for

your ideal any picture which you like best. Keep it in a clean and beautiful surrounding. Your seat and the position of the picture should be so arranged that there is a distance of about 3 ft. between you and the picture and it is just at the level of your eyes. The distance of 3 ft. is approximately stated but you can adjust the distance in such a way that concentration on the image will not cause strain or burning sensation in the eyes. Sit comfortably in any sitting posture you like and keep your spinal cord erect and fix your eyes on the picture. Do not strain or stretch your eyes. Do not either close your eyes completely. Keep them in as normal a condition as possible. Gently give hint to your eyes that for five to seven minutes they have to gaze at the picture from head to foot and nowhere else. Similarly, direct your mind that it has to chant constantly the name of the picture in front of you and cajole your intellect gently and lovingly that for a short while it has to do nothing else but to meditate on the virtues of the revered image in front of it. Devote 5-7 minutes to this practice on the first day in a quiet and congenial place. The most propitious time for this practice is the time immediately after sunrise. Please remember that for these five to seven minutes which you devote to this practice, you should avoid any strain whatsoever to eyes. So long as you are able to concentrate without any efforts, you can continue. In case of any burning sensation, pain or strain, at once close your eyes in a natural way. However, continue the practice of repeating the name and concentrating the mind on the virtues of your ideal and

when the pain in the eyes stops, restart the practice. Even if in the early stages of practice you have to close your eyes 9 to 10 times you need not worry. Gradually by regular practice, you will succeed in concentrating your eyes for one, two or three minutes. In the early stages, as soon as you close your eyes, your mind will be fleeting away after grotesque and dirty thoughts and visions. Don't get disheartened. Again and again try to withdraw the mind from its wild ramblings and fix it on the chosen goal. This marks the beginning of your practice.

6

Why Filthy Thoughts specially spring forth even at the Time of Practice ?

RAM can very well envisage how you are going to take lightly the technique recommended by him complaining that you were better off before starting the practice. He could very well imagine your pleading, "while chit-chatting with friends, my mind was not running amok ; dirty thoughts did not creep into the mind either, but as soon as I start yoga practice, as if by magic, dirty thoughts and morbid fantasies rush in from nowhere and start pestering me so that the mind unwittingly misses the goal and starts building castles in the air". You are perfectly right in saying so. So long you were accustomed to obey the dictates of your mind. Now you have started dictating to it. Tell me, how can it tolerate your supremacy ! The mind is now trying to subdue and frighten you but you need not be disheartened. You should scrupulously adhere to your practice regularly with faith. Now, let us calmly think for a while ; wherefrom and why these filthy thoughts spring up and chase you just at the time of contemplation. My dear friend, these thoughts do not drop in from somewhere outside. They are all lying in ambush in your own mind. The only difference is that we were not hitherto aware of them, nor did we heed them so far. Let us try an experiment. Take a glass of pure water and put some dirt in it. For a short while the water will appear dirty

but after some time the dirt will settle down at the bottom and the water on the top will look pure. Our mind is like this pure water. In it fall particles of innumerable desires, craving for fulfilment and when after some time these desires settle down at the bottom, the upper layer of mind again appears clear but the moment you start cleaning the dirty glass of water and stir it, the water which so far appeared pure at once presents a very dirty look and you see how dirty the water really was. The condition of the mind of a person who is about to enter upon contemplation is exactly comparable to the glass filled with muddy water. For ages together, filthy thoughts have settled down in thick layers on your mind. Now they start coming up in the cleaning process and naturally you feel horrified and disappointed on seeing the ugly and stupid projections of those thoughts. Do not imagine that by running away from them they will cease disturbing you. Sometime or the other you will have to chase them out. You have to reduce them to ashes in the incandescent glow of sublime thoughts or scotch them completely in the bright flame of the knowledge of Divine Reality. There is no other short-cut. By the method suggested to you, you will succeed in concentrating your eyes steadily on the supreme God who is the embodiment of divine qualities, the fountain of bliss and knowledge absolute. Your mind will slowly become fixed in contemplation of His vision and His divine qualities. True knowledge and sincere devotion will possess you and uproot all foul and impure thoughts.

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7

Obstacle in the First Stage

WHEN a man embarks upon the practice of meditation, since he is not habituated to sit erect, just after three or four days he starts getting pain in the back or sprain in the hand or a burning sensation in the eyes due to overstrain. This makes the student lazy and irregular in his practice that day. After a few days pain in the legs stands in the way of his practice. As a result of such breaks, continuity of practice, which is a vital requisite, suffers a setback. Due to such irregularity he fails to make any advancement. After spending a few months in intermittent practice when he notices no progress, he begins to question the efficacy of the practice since he finds that neither has his mind attained peace nor has his eyes gained strength. In the result, he abandons the practice as worthless. In order to avoid such a catastrophe, it is essential that the student should have sound health. You are all aware of the wise saying 'Sound health is indeed the primary instrument for the practice of Dharma.' It is therefore advised that for making headway in spiritual studies the first requisite is to have a sound body. A sound and powerful mind can abide only in a sound body. The three essential requisites of sound health are—open air and light, simple and moderate (*Satwic*) food and regular bracing exercise. For want of open air and sunlight, the inhabitants of crowded cities are poorer in health and

vigour as compared to people from the countryside. Therefore, long morning and evening walks for a couple of hours are recommended for the city-dwellers. If they can afford they should stay out some time in open air, leaving the crowded atmosphere of cities. The Westerners lay great emphasis on this point with the result that the people living there are stronger and healthier than those living in India.

In regard to diet, it is enough to say that food should be nutritious and lightly cooked. It should not bring on heaviness and lethargy. Food should ordinarily consist of milk, ghee, butter, curd, cheese, fresh fruits like lemon, orange, malta, plantain, mango, apple, grapes, peach, etc. or dry fruits like almonds, dates, etc. in a moderate quantity. Similarly, wheat-flour, fresh green vegetables, tomatoes, red and white carrots, beetroots, etc. should also be moderately used. A student should choose his food according to his taste and purse. Intellectual refinement mostly depends upon purity of food intake. It is, however, very much distressing to notice that such pure and nutritious food is conspicuous by its absence. In consequence, we see all around stark display of perverted and degenerated mentality. The third essential requirement is exercise. It is a must for generating sufficient warmth in the body and thus to help digestion of food so as to avoid indigestion and constipation. In fact, constipation is the commonest ailment of the day to be witnessed in each and every house. We hardly come across a fortunate person who is not affected by constipation. Victims of constipation often waste a good

deal of money in order to obtain relief by unnatural ways such as the use of Kruschen Salt, Milk of Magnesia, Andrews Liver Salt or enema and yet these means are inefficacious for a complete cure. There are several games like Tennis, Hockey, Football, Cricket, Badminton, etc. which fall in the category of exercise but it is generally seen that these games tend to bring in laziness, demand much more rest and sleep and hinder mental development. They have, however, to be preferred to inaction. Our ancient seers have, however, developed exercises called *asanas*. They are so adapted as to ensure the requisite exercise to the entire body in a short time and thus facilitate digestion of food. The digestive system gets so toned up that no trace of constipation is left; but what is more important than all this is that the practice of *asanas* helps mental progress, removes fatigue and lassitude and rejuvenates both mind and body with agility, energy and vigour which are prerequisites of spiritual upliftment.

It is said in the *Bhagavadgita*

Yuktaharaviharasya Yuktacestasya Karmasu
Yuktasvapnavabodhasya Yoga bhavati dukhhaha

(B.G., VI. 17)

'He who is temperate in food and recreation, who is restrained in his activities, whose sleep and waking are regulated attains yoga (discipline) which destroys all sorrow.'

Readers will have realized from the foregoing that side by side with the practice of meditation there must be simple and moderate food, regular exercise of *asanas* and

open and fresh air. In the absence of these prerequisites physical ailments and mental lethargy are likely to hamper a student's spiritual progress. In that event man will not only be deprived of the supreme happiness of attaining the utimate goal of life, but he will have also to forego peace and happiness in this world.

8

Attunement of Mind with Sight

LET us now proceed to the second stage. With a regular practice of the first lesson for a few months, the student will be in a position to steady his sight on his goal for three to four minutes at a time and while doing so he would have noticed all around the object yellow, pink, red and finally white aura. Even the object itself would sometimes appear lighted. At times, instead of the object, only light would be seen; the object would appear luminous exuding light. Now you enter upon the second stage of the practice when you recall the form of your object and repeat its name mentally and bring it before your mind's eye, whenever you are not otherwise preoccupied, even if the object is not in front of you. You will naturally enquire how this is possible since you are used to concentrating your mind and eyes on the object when it is in front of you, but not in the absence of the object itself. My dear friend, I can assure you that you can accomplish this with some well directed practice. In this context, I would invite attention to the following observation of the famous philosopher of the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad.

Anyatramana abhuvam nadarshanam

Anyatramana abhuvam nadshrowsham (1.5.3.)

'My mind was not there, therefore, I did not see. My mind was elsewhere, therefore, I did not hear.' This means that our eyes and ears which are the instruments of seeing and hearing cannot perform their functions so long as

the mind is not associated with them. All our sense organs function in close co-ordination with mind only. If you direct the mind towards the eyes the entire energy of mind gets concentrated in the eyes; and the moment you think of any object the eyes begin to visualise it in a concrete form. It is a common experience in life that whenever we think of a person familiar to us, his dim figure steadily arises before our mind's eye. Since, however, we have not trained our eyes properly, we are not in a position to see the figure clearly in flesh and form for a long time, but by our preliminary practice we have learnt to attune our mind with our sense of perception and therefore that tamed mind follows our eyes, like a faithful servant. Now, as soon as the eyes are withdrawn, the mind is also simultaneously withdrawn from the object. In other words, now our eyes not only see but think also.

Take an illustration of everyday occurrence. Suppose some one has very bitterly abused two persons, one of whom is illiterate and the other literate. The illiterate person does not feel anything. He just ignores the incident and goes his own way. The literate person, on the other hand, at once feels hurt. Why this difference ? Because, in the case of the latter, the moment he hears the abusive words, his eyes, associated as they are with the mind, fully grasp their meaning and conceive the filthy implication at once. Naturally, he loses his temper and his eyes become red with anger. Such examples make it clear that as soon as words are uttered, the eyes can promptly visualise the thought and feeling conveyed by those words and if our eyes are properly trained then with ease they can see the vivid

picture. Now that you have trained your eyes, the moment you utter the name of your object, wherever your eyes may be wandering at the moment, you will immediately be able to bring before your mind's eye the form and substance which the name represents. Start and develop the practice of thus visualising the object mentally without the object being before your eyes. After your success in the first stage of practice, you will readily accomplish this. While thus steadying your eyes, have firm faith, devotion and love. It is now no longer necessary for you to continue repeating the name. Besides, if you continue to do so, as suggested in the first stage, your concentration will, in some measure, be weakened and you will not be able to have a steady and clear vision of the object for a long time. Now the duration of your practice will automatically increase. You have already learnt to steady the sight for 5 to 6 minutes at a time and by repeating this practice daily 4 to 5 times, you can easily devote half an hour every day. Besides, whenever you get leisure from your work, your habit of steadying the sight will automatically attract you towards the object and thus several times a day you will taste the delight which is the natural result of this practice. Thus, day by day the measure of your exercise and the joy of contemplation will increase; but you must note that the joy induced by this practice does not wean you away from your usual activity. You should do your daily chores, study, teach and do office work with intense zeal. You ought to pay due attention to all your activities and duties. During this second stage of practice, there is the grave danger of the narrow-minded student developing a

one-track mind since he now finds joy in meditation and thus steadily loses interest in his normal activities. This kind of obstacle is technically called 'Rasa' or Taste(complete engrossment in something without being conscious of anything else). By sustained practice the student develops 'taste' in the pursuit of his goal. His devotion becomes so single pointed that he develops dislike and distaste for everything else. This obstacle can be overcome only when the third stage is reached. Some students mistake the second stage for the final one, for they think it as the stage of pure awareness (Samadhi). They give up their profession, avocation and appointed duties in life. This entails a great loss to the society and the nation to which they belong. Over and above this, as a result of ascetic practices, these persons come to acquire a magnetic influence over others (which is transmitted through their breaths) and thus people at large are likely to copy the object of their reverence in regard to inaction and indifference to social and national obligations. You might question as to how one can silently influence the thoughts and ideas of others. Your query can be easily answered.

The human mind is never devoid of thought process or activity at any moment. The mind of the spiritual aspirant is surcharged with thoughts about his goal and they are reflected in his eyes. On account of the steadfastness and purity of his eyes the thought wave which accompanies the rays which radiate from his eyes penetrates everyone who falls within its ken. That is how the thought-wave enters and influences the minbs of the

audience through the eyes. Some mystics thus initiate their disciples into spiritual mystery by transmitting energy through scintilla of their eyes. As a result of the transmission of thoughts from the Guru's radiant eyes many neophytes not only get initiated into spiritual practice but instantly acquire firm faith in the practice. Have you watched the performance of a hypnotist ? If you have noticed that he does not say aloud his instructions to his object like mesmerists do. He only concentrates on his thoughts and fixedly looks at his object. The hypnotised person follows and acts according to the thoughts of the hypnotist. Men and women who come into contact with a spiritual aspirant in the second stage of practice are influenced by him in a similar way. There is another hazard against which the aspirant must be forewarned. Should his mind ever be overpowered by sensuous thoughts, then knowingly or unknowingly he is likely to misuse his hypnotic power to influence the minds of other men and women and thereby to lure them into committing some sinful act to satiate his own cravings. This will mean his utter downfall. The aspirant must, therefore, tread this new ground with abundant caution and vigilance.

9

Association of Thought and Reflection with Sight

SO far we have not dealt with the subject-matter of concentration. Let us now turn our attention to the object on which the mind's eye is steadfastly concentrated so that our spiritual practice is not narrow in its outlook but has a universal approach. We should come to perceive or comprehend it as universal, omnipresent and omniscient entity. Here begins the third stage of spiritual practice. We have by now realised that our mind is no longer fickle as in the early stages but has come to acquire equanimity and it can now concentrate on the chosen object. The intrinsic function of the mind is to think, to guess or imagine things to reflect favourable as well as unfavourable impressions about things. However in the first stage of practice, our mind was so wild and unbridled that it lacked steadfastness. It used to spin out wild fantasies which had neither head nor tail. For this reason, we initially trained the mind to steady itself on one object, one substratum, with the help of our eyes. Now, having become one with the faculty of perception, it has no distinct existence of its own. It has, as if, lost its faculty or function thinking and imagining things. It has now realised that it has no other function except that of perception which it has usurped from the eyes. Someone will say : "Why now force the mind to think and discriminate ; let the poor hting experience the joy of seeing objects to its heart's

content for a change." There is one difficulty in countenancing this. The mind will become inert and will abdicate all its functions and will fail to realise the universality, omniscience and omnipotence of its goal. It will also miss the bliss which permeates everything under all conditions.

In order to maintain the well-ordained cycle of the universe, whenever disorder and evil prevail, God descends on the earth in the incarnation of great personalities like Rama, Krishna, Gautam Buddha, Parsuram and others and destroys the wicked, unrighteous and unjust and protects the righteous thereby restoring order, virtue, peace and harmony. By His own example, He delivers to the world his message that every one should do one's appointed duty according to natural tendencies in a spirit of detachment and dedication and with unswerving devotion to the Lord. This path alone leads to ultimate liberation. It would be unwise to disregard this divine message and to give up all activities. So much so, it would prove to be disastrous. It is not necessary to annihilate the mind. We have to bring it face to face with the inner self, the Supreme Reality. We have to motivate our mind with this glorious mission. We have to light it up with His light and spark and awaken it to do all activities with unattachment, so that they lead us on to liberation rather than to bondage. Its awakening is no longer harmful. In the first stage of spiritual practice, the sight was engrossed in the physical aspect, in the second stage it developed spiritual power and in the third stage it became spiritually charged. The time is

now ripe to coach up your mind to think, reflect, contemplate and imagine but all thinking, reflection, contemplation and imagination should be confined to the object of meditation only and let your steadfast eyes stand guard over the mind. Observe closely the thought currents and the varied fancies which the mind waves round the object and contemplate on how the very object which is present in front of you can be all-pervading. Try to comprehend the nature of ultimate Reality, think of the cosmos, the macrocosm and the microcosm. Whatever you can perceive, feel and think about the object the physical body consisting of five elements, five organs of perception, five organs of action, five kinds of vital airs, five principles of smell, sound, taste, touch and form, the inner sense organs like mind, intellect, ego, etc.—all these are found in all living creatures of the universe. The object of your contemplation is the perceiver, the director and overall controller of your body, mind, intellect and ego ; therefore, though it subsists in them, it is different from all of them and uncontaminated by them. Likewise the same supreme power permeates all living beings and it is the one and the only one power which controls and guides their bodies, mind and intellect. The self-same supreme power is the object of our meditation.

Go on reflecting and contemplating in this strain and concentrate your thoughts on them. You will then come to realise that the object of your concentration is all-pervading, all-embracing ; it has all qualities and it is without any quality as well. It has a form as well

as it is formless. In this way, your steadfast gaze will have the magnificent view of that Supreme Reality. Your physical sight has now been elevated to a spiritual vision ; the Supreme Reality has now come within its ken. Your vision is now engrossed in enjoying the bliss of supreme consciousness. Nay, it has become one with the Supreme Reality. Wherever you now direct your eyes, you visualise nothing but Supreme Reality alone, whether within or without, Supreme Reality alone is omnipresent. This was the supramental state of Bliss of saints like Mirabai, Tukaram, Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, Shri Eknath Maharaj, Shri Lallishwari of Kashmir, Shri Paramanand, Swami Ramkrishna Paramhamsa, etc. Although these saints attained such an ecstatic state, they didn't give up their daily routine, occupation or activities. They continued to perform the diverse duties ordained by their position in society, with an altruistic purpose namely to set a shining example to society at large and to attain the well-being and uplift of humanity. Service to humanity amounts to service to their God, in their eyes. Though we speak of the sun as the source of light and energy to the world, the sun is supremely unconscious of the fact, since it is merely fulfilling its natural mission of giving light, heat and life-energy to the world. This is precisely the noble role which these saints selflessly play when they live in the world. Having come in contact with such saints and by following their foot-steps, people learn to discharge their duties in life without attachment and in a righteous way. A society, State or nation which abounds in such people

enjoys complete freedom and always remains at the summit of prosperity. In order to develop such consciousness the mind has to be trained to contemplate and get firmly established in the idea that the object of concentration is omnipresent and that it is none else than the omnipresent and omniscient Supreme Reality. You will now appreciate that the technique of concentration of the gaze and the mind does not imply gazing at the object with strained eyes. It does not also mean that you have to keep your eyes wide open throughout the day and night without winking. The secret of the technique is this : Wherever you cast your glance, you are able to see, feel and experience the presence of the object of contemplation, just as St. Mira used to see her Lord Krishna all around her. So much so, whenever your eyes and thought stray away from the object, you have forthwith to bring them back to the object. In the *Bhagavadgita* the Lord prescribes the following remedy :

yato yato niscarati manas cancalam asthiram
tatas tato niyamai tad atmany eva vasam nayet
(B.G., VI. 26)

'Whichever way the wavering and unsteady mind slips away, let him restrain and turn it back from there and bring it under the control of the self alone'. After continuous and regular practice in this way for some years, you will be adept in attaining this state and thereafter without straying from your path, you will do all your duties very methodically and efficiently as ordained by

the results of your past actions and desires. Thus, the practice of this yoga will not only ensure your own spiritual welfare and liberation but will easily be conducive to the spiritual uplift of the society at large.

10

Different Grades of Aspirants

ACCORDING to the cumulative effect of the indelible impressions of past births (Samskaras) we notice a lot of difference in the faculties of understanding, perception and thought of human beings. You have to explain a thing ten times to a person and yet he fails to grasp it, while some one else picks it up at once. Similarly, ask one person to execute some work, he does not take interest in it and even if he is seen putting his best effort, he soon gets fed up with it on account of his failure. The same job may be carried out successfully by another in a very short time. The only explanation for this difference in response can be that the prior impressions of the former person must not have been quite favourable and he must not have made any attempt in his past births to learn these things or execute such assignments. All these things are thus new to him and therefore, in the present birth he has a low level of understanding and he is unsuccessful in his work. In the case of the latter person, the impression of his previous life must have been very conducive. In his past births, he must have had occasion to apply his mind to these things and execute such type of work and must have then attained some measure of skill therein. Naturally during the present birth he is quick in grasping the problem and executing the job. We notice a similar difference amongst persons who take to spiritual practice.

Many find it very difficult even to reach the first stage and they possibly prove utter failures on account of their lukewarm efforts. On the other hand, some aspirants have no need to go through the first stage and they simply step into the second and embark on their further practice and attain proficiency within a brief time. It, therefore, follows that the congenial impressions of previous births account for his quick success.

There is not even the slightest intention of foisting on everybody the technique and practice suggested in these pages. It can, however, be safely asserted that catholicity is the distinctive feature of this technique and there is no scope for the narrow outlook characteristic of other schools of thought. Anybody can follow this path, irrespective of creed or faith. Be he a devotee of a form or of the formless, a theist or an atheist, a yogi or a vedanti be he a worshipper of Lord Shiv, Ganpati or Devi Saraswati, be he a Jain or a Buddhist, be he an inhabitant of any part of the world, according to his choice and faith in the particular object of meditation, he can make a sure progress in his studies. Some one may prefer to concentrate on some picture, another may prefer to concentrate on the content of the prayer, e.g., the Gayatri Mantra, or any one of the four Mahavakyas,

'*Prajnanam Brahma*'—Consciousness is Brahman

'*Aham Brahmasmi*'—I am Brahman

'*Tat twam asi*'—That thou art

Ayam atma Brahma—This atma is Brahman

Some one may choose 'Om' or a mere black point. Whatever the object may be, so long as it is easy and

convenient to concentrate thereon, the student is bound to succeed. There is no room for dogma here and the student has an absolutely free choice in regard to the object of concentration. The crux of the matter is that perfect concentration of the mind's eye is the goal and the progress of the aspirant is assured if he scrupulously observes the above hints.

11

Need of an Object for Concentration of Sight

SINCE the creation of man, whatever he beholds all round in this world has a form. He does not notice any object which has no form at all. Since time immemorial he has been used to understand or perceive only objects as having forms with the aid of his five sense organs and to experience joy or sorrow according to the possession or loss of those objects. Therefore, he fails to appreciate what an object without a form is like and how he can be familiar with it. Only a few fortunate souls who have a fund of pious actions of the previous birth to their credit succeed in concentrating the mind on an abstraction. Not that there are no such persons in the world, but this is not within the ken of the common man. The aim of religion is to throw open a right royal road to everybody, old or young, wise or unwise and to offer him an attractive means, just like a play-thing, which will help him in attaining Supreme Bliss. Since a majority of human beings is unintelligent, unless some attractive symbol with a form is suggested to them as an object for concentration, they are incapable of making any progress. Thus say the *Bhagavadgita* :

yad yad acarati sresthas
tad-tad eva turo janah
sa yat pramanam kurute
lokas tad anuvartate. (B.G., III. 21)

'Whatever a great man does, the same is done by others

as well. Whatever standard he sets, the world follows'. The common folk have reverence for and immense faith in the spiritual practice followed and preached by great men, and deriving inspiration from them they follow that path with great devotion and in due course fulfil their life's mission. It, therefore, becomes the foremost duty of great men to lead a righteous life and set an example which the common folk may copy and thereby ensure their welfare.

A study of the Upanishads reveals that in those days spiritual practice was taught by conjoining it and showing its intimate relationship with daily duties. The first step was to inculcate a worshipful attitude to food by accepting it as Supreme Reality. Later on, the worship of the life-force, mind and intellect was taught step by step and after the intellect became sharp and sublime, the student was initiated into the esoteric knowledge of the Supreme Reality. The inhabitants of Aryavarta in those days of yore were quite hale and hearty; they used to take nutritious and simple food and there was comparatively less of temptation and distraction of the mind. Therefore, they possessed a keen intellect capable of comprehending the subtle, all-pervading and unmanifest ultimate Reality. In sharp contrast, the body, mind and intellect of modern men are so feeble, fickle, emaciated and libidinous that far from steadying their mind's eye on the unmanifest, it has become impossible for them to concentrate even on the manifest objects with forms. Therefore, there can be no objection to one's choice of some great teacher who is endowed with sublime quali-

ties and who preaches the gospel of universal love, piety and chastity as an object for concentration so that we advance on the spiritual and ethical as well as on the mundane plane. In the final analysis, both the manifest and the unmanifest merge into one. The difference in the concept of Supreme Reality as with or without form, with or without any attributes, manifest or unmanifest is due merely to the points of view and is not at all fundamental. At bottom, there is no difference at all. What we may be unable to see or recognise with our eyes today, we may clearly visualise when the vision attains subtlety, as a result of appropriate guidance. A student of physics clearly perceives in water the combination of oxygen and hydrogen but one who is innocent of physics is incapable of understanding the simple fact. This illustration establishes that as our knowledge advances even unmanifest becomes manifest. It is therefore idle to fight like a fanatic over the issue whether the Supreme Reality is manifest or unmanifest. Follow your own dictates regarding the concept of the Supreme Reality and choice of an object for concentration and hold on fast to it whereby you can evolve yourself, gain strength of mind and make your intellect pure. If you are able to evolve by concentrating on the unmanifest object, do it by all means but see that you are not engulfed into fanaticism. Some people presume that worship of the unmanifest is superior. Therefore, to be recognised as superior aspirants, they profess to be worshippers of the unmanifest. However, they are not able to concentrate on the unmanifest, their intellect fails to grasp the abstract unmanifest and

their mind refuses to accept it for practice. In their frustration, they waste their entire span of life without achieving anything. When some people are advised to repeat the divine name loudly, they just ignore it. When they are questioned as to why they are not repeating the divine name, they promptly reply, 'What is the use of shouting about the divine name ? Why make an outward show? Do you think that God is deaf and he can hear only when you shout at him! I repeat the divine name inwardly and not for a show!' To a certain extent, there appears to be some truth and realism in this answer but facts are usually altogether different. They are not able to repeat the divine name either loudly or silently. They thus deceive others and themselves too. By such self-deception it is they who ultimately suffer. They lead a life full of misery and sorrow, devoid of mental peace. Therefore, whatever be the object of worship—whether manifest or unmanifest, according to your light, fix steadfastly thereon the gaze of your mind's eye and forge ahead on the spiritual path. To sum up, an object whether manifest or unmanifest, is absolutely essential for concentration.

12

Concentration with Complete Negation of Thought

AS a result of ratiocination and scientific enquiry, you are now convinced that the object of your contemplation is none else than the Supreme Reality (Brahman) and that you are visualising it. At this stage some one may enquire—How possibly can an object with gross form be the Supreme Reality! After briefly dealing with this poser we will revert to our subject.

The cosmic consciousness or Supreme Reality is all-pervading and all-embracing. It is within and without and all around. Look, a 'point' is subtle and formless and a triangle or a circle is nothing else but an extension of points. You have no difficulty in understanding that a triangle or a circle is essentially an extension of the idea of a 'point'. Basically there is no contradiction in regarding a triangle or a circle as 'point'. Similarly, between Supreme Reality and the world of objects there is no difference. When the Supreme Reality assumes a gross and manifest form, it is referred to as the world and when the world assumes or reverts to the subtlest state, it becomes the Supreme Reality. A short story will effectively elucidate the basic idea.

Once there lived a fakir. He used to be engrossed in himself. One day he went to a cloth shop and demanded a piece of cloth to make a shirt for 'God'. The shopkeeper enquired of him as to the measurements of God. The fakir at once asked the shopkeeper to take his measure-

ments saying that they were the same as God's. The shopkeeper thought that the fakir was joking but any way he handed over the required piece of cloth to the fakir. He then went to a tailor and told him to stitch a shirt for God. When the tailor asked for measurements, the fakir told him to prepare a shirt as per his measurements. The tailor took him for a fool. However, he prepared the shirt and gave it to the fakir. He then went to a shoemaker and demanded a pair of shoes for God. When the shoemaker asked for the size, the fakir gave his size. The shoemaker made a fool of the fakir but gave him a pair of shoes. Likewise, the fakir approached a goldsmith and asked him to prepare a gold ring for God's finger. Here also the fakir gave the size of his own finger. The goldsmith took him to be mad but believing that he may be a spiritually evolved soul offered him a ring. The king came to know of this fakir, that he calls himself 'God' and collects all things in the name of God. He, therefore, summoned the fakir. The fakir appeared before him without any qualm. The king demanded, 'O you fakir, you have committed a great sin. Living as you do in the world created by God you have sinned against Him by calling yourself "God". You deserve capital punishment for your crime.'

In a collected mood, the fakir entreated the king to listen to his humble pleading before passing the final judgement. The king agreed.

The fakir enquired, 'O king, you have just said I am faithless to God who has created this world. Is this world really the creation of God?'

The king asserted, 'Yes it is His. Whose else can it be?'

The fakir said, 'It is admitted. Then this place, this garden, this land, this sky and all these people are His !'

The king exclaimed, 'Of course! There can be no doubt about it!'

The fakir thus cleared the ground and observed: 'That means, O king, you also belong to Him and I too. Then whose hands are mine ?'

The king answered, 'They are His.'

Pointing to his own feet, the fakir further questioned, 'Then whose feet are these?'

The king replied, 'They are God's.'

'Whose are these fingers ?' 'God's.'

The fakir then finally asked, 'O king, now that you agree that my entire body belongs to God, then, what crime have I committed in demanding a ring for God's finger, shoes for His feet and a shirt for His body?'

The king appreciated the fakir's logic and realised his mistake. He then treated the fakir with great respect and released him.

Likewise, when the entire world belongs to God and there is nothing in this world which is not permeated by Him, then, do you think that He does not subsist only in the object which you have chosen for meditation ! He abides in your chosen object as much as He abides in any other object you may think of. For, there is not even an iota of space which is not occupied by Him. In fact, the Supreme Reality itself is standing in front of you in the form of your object of meditation.

You have only to cultivate this feeling and elevate your emotions to that pitch. You will then come to realise that every object in the world is one with that Supreme Reality. The saint Tukaram thus experienced the Supreme Reality of Lord Vithal and he saw nothing else but Lord Vithal alone all around him. We now switch over to our main theme.

So far you have covered the first three stages of the spiritual practice *drishtiyoga*. Now, you are on the threshold of the fourth and final stage of this yoga. After contemplation and reflection when you come to the firm conviction that the object of your meditation is everything, that it subsists in everything and therefore it is nothing but the Supreme Reality, there is no need to inquire about it any further. You have now to concentrate your mind on your object, the Supreme Reality. There is now not a vestige of doubt in your mind that the object of your concentration is the Supreme Reality. Every object which comes within your ken takes the form of the object of meditation and you experience in it the same Supreme Reality. Henceforth this object will be your inseparable beloved friend. In the midst of all your normal activities, such as eating, sleeping, sitting, working, talking, etc. you will be completely absorbed in the object of meditation. This is the fourth and final stage of the spiritual practice. All the activities of a person who has established himself in this state surmount the duality of joy and sorrow, love and hatred, attraction and repulsion and he develops an outlook of equality towards all. All actions in such a blissful state

bear the imprint of unattachment and love for all. What counts is the attitude of the mind. Therefore, even if an act done in an offensive mood may not in fact result in harm to another, it would still amount to causing pain or harm to him. Sometimes, due to sheer ignorance some act done with good intentions, in support of a good cause or person leads to the annihilation of the entire civilization, the very foundation of human life. History is full of such illustrations showing how such acts have snatched away freedom from some nations and made them weak, powerless and servile. Lord Shri Krishna says in the *Bhagavadgita*.

yasya na hamkrto bhavo budhir yasya na lipyate
hatva pisa imamllokan na hanti na nibadhyate

(B.G., XVIII. 17)

Even if a person who has risen above Ego and is merged in Brahman which is the object of his meditation were to kill others in fulfilment of his duty in life, he is not tainted with the sin of killing. In the true philosophical sense, the result of any action depends entirely on the attitude of the mind with which it is done. The saints who have established themselves firmly in the exalted fourth stage of mystical practice, explained above, perform all their activities in a spirit of absolute detachment and complete surrender to God. They are, therefore, least bothered about the ostensible outcome of their actions.

Some one may here venture to ask 'Granting that these men have gained supreme knowledge and they have attained the state of Supreme consciousness, but

then, why do they not continue to work in this world for the betterment of humanity at large ? Why should they not extend to others the precious benefit of their own knowledge and mystical experience ?' There is a simple answer to the query :—Each one of these exalted souls comes into this world with a specific purpose and mission. Each one has a distinct sphere of activity. Some, like Swami Vivekananda and Yogananda, take upon themselves the spiritual awakening of mankind ; some, like Shri Shankaracharya and Ramdas, reorientate and resuscitate the decadent religion ; some others spread the glorious gospel of the *Gita* and the Upanishads and enlighten the intelligentsia in society. Some like St. Tulsidas and Tukaram through their intensely devotional songs spread the cult of devotion amongst the masses. Some others are apparently inactive but enkindle the bright flame of spiritual wisdom in their disciples with a mere look. In short, the heritage of accumulated merit accounts for the wide divergence in the choice of the sphere of activities of these noble souls. Dear friends, having thus attained mastery in the 'Drishti yoga' while enjoying the beatitude of the fourth stage, you have to fulfil your appointed mission in the wonderful creation of God.

13

How Much the World owes to the Exalted, Emancipated Souls who live in Recluse

IT is a popular belief that a man can do good to others only by delivering discourses or tendering some piece of advice. If, however, we give a close thought to the matter, we can realise that an exalted person can do immense good to others either by his mere presence or by radiating spiritual vibrations. For example, in winter when we sit by the fireside, fire wards off cold and keeps us warm in a quiet and unassuming manner. So, too, does the wind without any ado ; it brings delight to our mind by wafting towards us the pleasant fragrance from the flowers in a nearby garden. Similarly, the rays of the sun sustain our life by giving us light and warmth. They bestow these gifts on man but do not blow their trumpets. Likewise is the existence in this world of a serene saint who has realised Brahman. Being attuned to the Supreme Reality, such saints are the fountain-heads of unalloyed truth, love, joy and knowledge. They send out powerful divine currents which fill the entire atmosphere with divine qualities of love, truth and knowledge—virtues. Naturally, all these men and women, nay even birds and animals who live in the surrounding atmosphere, are surcharged with divine qualities and reap a rich harvest. The lives of such beings become sublime without their being aware of the miraculous effect the mere presence of the saint amidst them has

brought about. Some individuals living in an atmosphere thus surcharged with truth and universal love evolve themselves into noble souls and while ostensibly performing their wordly activities, disseminate true knowledge among the common folk through lectures, discourses and devotional songs. The unseen guiding force behind their activities is the Mahatma who is one with the ultimate Reality. Dear friends, disabuse your minds as to the vital mission which these Mahatmas are to fulfil in this world. All honour to the country or the community in which are born such perfect, noble souls!

14

Influence of the Object

OUR mind is naturally influenced by the nature of the object of concentration—according as the object is pre-eminently full of Sattva, Rajas or Tamas, the self-same element will correspondingly be reflected in the devotee.

In the *Bhagavadgita* it is explained :

yanti devavrata devan pitrn yanti pitrvratah
bhutani yanti bhutejya yanti madyajino pi mam

(B.G., IX. 25)

'Those who take to the worship of Gods go to the Gods, those who worship the manes reach the manes. Those who adore the spirits reach the spirits and those who worship Me attain to Me.' In other words, the devotee's approach to the object of his devotion defines the influence which the object will have on him and the intensity of our feelings and the depth of our devotion will motivate our further activities. In Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere we have come across devotees, who, when possessed by celestial powers like Kali, Hanuman and Narsimha, go into a veritable trance. No doubt now-a-days there are not a few cheats who play foul and therefore people have lost faith in the above mentioned phenomenon. It must, however, be borne in mind that such a transmission of divine powers is psychologically not impossible. When a hypnotist can make the subject perform actions according to his desires

by transmitting his thoughts to him, why should it not be possible for any one to influence one's own actions by the soul-force awakened by oneself.

The story goes : once a hypnotist went to the Durbar of an Indian prince in Rajasthan and he gave his performance. The king announced that if he could hypnotise his valiant commander and make him act as ordered, he would give the hypnotist a handsome reward. The hypnotist intently concentrated on the directions of the king and subjected the brave general to a hypnotic spell and when the latter started behaving accordingly the whole audience had a hearty laugh. They were astounded at the sight since, utterly oblivious of the fact that he was a valiant army general from the marshal tribe of Rajputs, he lost all control over himself, turned his turban into a lady's veil and blushed in a feminine style and started dancing like a dancing girl—a ridiculous performance never dreamt of from a brave self-possessed army general ! Mind you, this was the direct outcome of the concentration of mind by an outside agency. It is therefore obvious that we can even deeply influence our responsive mind with repeated auto-suggestions, the degree of success depending upon the depth of our own concentration and the intensity of the will power.

When we begin worshipping any deity, we recall to mind its powers and divine qualities as recorded in the ancient texts. By constant meditation on such qualities or by singing their praises we instil their noble qualities into our mind. In due course, they leave a deep impression on our sub-conscious mind. As a result,

under the inspiration of our conscious mind our sense organs start performing such actions as are normally attributed to the deities whom we worship. We are not, however, concerned with such transient powers. There is a class of sanctimonious devotees who sit in a room set apart for the purpose of meditation and devote an hour or two every day to prayer, to repeat the sacred name or to sing devotional songs but once they step out of the prayer-hall, they spend the rest of the day in evil deeds, which are a negation of their so-called spiritual practice. They take delight in untruth, hypocrisy, fraud and deceit, in amassing wealth even by foul means and cutting another's throat for paltry gains. They follow the same routine the following day and they seem to assume that their daily worship has, as it were, given them a licence for their inhuman, unjust and immoral acts. Such ill-conceived and ill-performed worship would not only arrest a man's progress but would lead to his utter ruin ! It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that while we chant hymns or sing our prayers, our mind should constantly be focussed on the sublime qualities depicted therein and we must remain steeped in that exalted mood throughout the day. In the initial stages, the mind may waver and in spite of one's good intentions, one might go astray by force of habit and act against the code of ethics. However as we advance on the path of spiritual practices, our conscience will stand guard and prick us and dissuade us from doing anything which is improper or immoral. After sufficient advancement in our spiritual practice,

worship and prayer will be a continuous unbroken process throughout the day and night and we would never stoop to do anything immoral or improper. This is the miracle wrought by the constant recollection of the sublime qualities of God. Similarly, whichever be the object we choose for concentration, if we establish complete identity between it and the Supreme Reality and continue our meditation with faith, devotion and conviction, then, in due course our mind will become one with it (*Brahman*). This is the most wholesome influence which the object necessarily exercises on the mind. Therefore, the object we place before our eyes should be exalted and noble and we must entertain the highest reverence and devotion towards it since it is bound to exercise a deep and ennobling effect on our mind and body.

15

Greatness of Sight

SENTRIES are usually posted to guard palaces and treasuries. They are normally strong and brave men and besides they are well armed. They are stationed very close to the palace or the treasury but should they be fast asleep while on duty, then, thieves are not deterred from stealing valuables from these places, in spite of their physical presence. Even if the guards are awake and they are doing their patrolling duty, if they are preoccupied with something else and are remiss in their duty, skilled thieves would successfully hoodwink the guards and make off with the stolen goods. On the other hand, if the guards are awake and vigilant, then, even if they are unarmed, the moment a thief sights them he dares not take a single step forward. On the contrary, he takes to his heels at once. So, too, in a class-room when the students find that their teacher's attention is directed elsewhere, they take advantage of his inattention and indulge in mischief. However, as soon as they notice that the teacher is observing them, then, whether he rebukes them or not, they dare not play pranks.

It is universal experience that sinful acts are committed in darkness, when nobody is watching the evildoer. Even if a single soul is noticed watching us, we refrain from commiting theft or other immoral action. So, too, when our eyes are intently fixed on the object of meditation,it will be watching all our actions. Therefore, the

rogue sense-organs dare not overreach us. These rogues can dupe us only when they notice that we are asleep or we are not watching them. Once our eyes are steadfastly focussed on the object of our devotion, neither external nor internal forces dare lead us astray from our goal.

Mere hearsay or long discussion or argument about a thing does not carry conviction to our mind as to its existence. When, however, it comes within the ken of our eyes, we do not require the help of any other sense organ or external aid to convince us about its true nature. Thus, eyes play a very important role in acquiring knowledge of objects. Therefore, the technique of steadying the sight is an easy method whereby we can achieve success in spiritual practice. Besides, this technique enables us, stage by stage, to attain a thorough knowledge of the nature of the ultimate Reality. From that moment, onwards, we become the monarch of the kingdom of beatitude. We then need nobody to advise us to cultivate a happy mood, since unbounded happiness naturally keeps streaming towards us from around to take shelter in us.

Dear friends, you will have by now realised the vital importance of the concentration of the eyes on the object of meditation in the technique. Since that is really the ultimate goal of life, no pains should be spared in mastering the technique. By following this course, we will achieve signal success in every field of activity in our life. Present-day society is poverty-stricken, emaciated, intellectually enfeebled and completely paralysed. If the people can take to the practice of *Drishtiyoga* in large numbers, then, there will be a resuscitation of this very society in

that people will regain their pristine purity and vigour, courage and intellectual stature. No more will people think and talk in terms of cold or Atomic war. In this great revival, let the people of all countries forget their differences and join hands together in a co-operative endeavour to work zealously towards the goal of abiding peace, prosperity and happiness to mankind. Let this dream come true:

Sarve bhavantu sukhinah, sarve santu niramyah
Sarve bhadrani pasyantu ma kascit duhkhamapnuyat

"May everybody in this world be happy, May everybody be free from disease. May everybody realise all good things. May none experience sorrow."

'Om Santih ! *Santih* ! *Santih* !